

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3094

INFO CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMIDEASTFOR

CINCPAC

SECDEF

CNO WASHDC

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

CONFIDENTIAL NEW DELHI 2791

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, IN

SUBJ: VISIT TO INDIA BY COMIDEASTFOR

1. SUMMARY. TEJA AND ARORA, AMERICA DIVISION, MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, INFORMED US MARCH 9 THAT GOI WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTIONS TO QTE PRIVATE UNQTE VISIT BY COMIDEASTFOR TO INDIA, WHILE OBJECTING TO ANY VISIT IN HIS OFFICIAL CAPACITY. WHEN ASKED WHAT WAS MEANT BY PRIVATE, THEY EXPLAINED SOMETHING AKN TO PLANS FOR REAR ADMIRAL BAYNE'S FAREWELL VISIT TO BOMBAY (WHICH NEVER MATERIALIZED). END SUMMARY.

2. WHEN REMINDED OF RECENT VISITS BY SOVIET SHIPS (JANUARY 1973), SOVIET ADMIRAL GORSHKOV (APRIL 1972) AND FIRST SEA LORD SIR MICHAEL POLLOCK (DECEMBER 1972), ARORA COMMENTED THESE VISITS WERE DIFFERENT IN THAT THEY EMANATED FROM LONDON AND MOSCOW RATHER THAN FROM A PERSIAN GULF AND INDIAN OCEAN NAVAL COMMAND. HE IMPLIED VISIT BY SENIOR MILITARY MAN FROM WASHINGTON MIGHT BE WELCOMED. EMBASSY OFFICER POINTED TO POSSIBLE MISINTERPRETATION OF GOI DECISION AND CONCOMITANT IMPACT UPON BUDDING BILATERAL RELATIONS. BOTH TEJA AND ARORA

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INSISTED THAT DECISION SHOULD BE INTERPRETED RATHER AS EFFORT TO AVOID ANY STRAIN IN BILATERAL RELATIONS, SINCE GOVERNMENT MIGHT COME UNDER HEAVY CRITICISM IN PARLIAMENT AND PRESS. EMBASSY OFFICER SPECULATED GOI DECISION PERHAPS BASED MORE ON OPPOSITION TO VISIT OF COMMANDER MIDDLE EAST FORCE, WITH HIS HEADQUARTERS IN BAHRAIN AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN PERSIAN GULF AND INDIAN OCEAN, AS CONFLICTING WITH INDIAN POLICY FAVORING ZONE OF PEACE IN INDIAN OCEAN AND OPPOSING GREAT POWER BASES AND/ OR FACILITIES. ARORA AGREED THIS MIGHT BE A REASONABLE INTERPRETATION OF GOI VIEWS, ADDING MEMORIES OF SEVENTH FLEET FORAY INTO INDIAN OCEAN STILL VIVID IN INDIA.

3. COMMENT: APPARENTLY, OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS, IN INDIAN EYES AT LEAST, HAVE NOT REACHED POINT WHERE OFFICIAL VISIT OF US AREA MILITARY COMMANDER IS ACCEPTABLE, EVEN AT RISK GOI DECISION MIGHT BE MISINTERPRETED. WE REGRET DECISION AND BELIEVE GOI FEARS REGARDING DOMESTIC REACTION ARE EXAGGERATED. HOWEVER, THEY BELIEVE ORIENTATION VISIT, WITH MINIMUM CONTACT WITH GOI OFFICIALS, IS ALL TRAFFIC WILL BEAR AT PRESENT. THIS, OF COURSE, MIGHT ESTABLISH PRECEDENT FOR GOI TO REFUSE FUTURE OFFICIAL VISIT REQUESTS.

MOYNIHAN

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